

Advent Reflection 22.12.2016

As we await the birth of our Saviour, I wish to offer you three images for reflection:



Our Gospel reading recounts the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1: 57-66) – we are invited into the joy of Elizabeth, her family and friends when God was merciful to her. She who had borne the anguish of barrenness now bore a child - a wonderful testament to the faithfulness of God to those who place their trust in Him. We enter into the dreams, hopes and expectations that she must have had for the little one that she carried. We can only imagine her joy. The moment her beloved Zachary revealed God's name for their child the gift of speech was restored to him and he praised God. The mystery of who this child might be began to unfold.

However, little did they realise that the child of their senior years would herald the Son of God and later lay down his life in faithfulness to his mission. Their courage and that of their son, John, were undaunted as they remained faithful to their mission to the end and encourage us to do the same.

The image of migrants crossing turbulent seas as they seek shores of safety has deeply moved me. Heavily pregnant mothers have fled war, violence and starvation to eke out a better life for their families. On occasion some have given birth on route. Highly trained midwives or Special Care Baby Unit were not available.



Malnourished mothers may have had little to offer the fruit of their womb as it was placed on their breast. Against all odds, may survived; the desire of God to support fragile life is confirmed once more. Desperate for safety, these little families continued on their journey but discovered that many country borders were closed to receive them. Others had strict entry criteria. My prayer is that Governments, Churches and Religious Congregations may be able to work together to implement a hope filled response for fragile, prophetic lives that remain at great risk.

My concluding image is one of gratitude to our many Sisters who have supported vulnerable expectant mothers and children as they travelled their own perilous journeys on the sea of life. May each one be enfolded in the merciful heart of God. May their courage and faithfulness inspire us to continue to be faithful to our mission as the dawn of our salvation breaks upon us all once more.

